

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are the claims currently pending in the Application.

Claim 1, 9 and 10 are amended to clarify features recited thereby.

Formal Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for foreign priority and the receipt of the priority document.

Further, Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging review and consideration of the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statements filed August 30, 2001 and September 16, 2003.

However, the Examiner is requested to acknowledge review and consideration of the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed April 6, 2001.

Rejection of Claims 5-8 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

Claims 5-8 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. This rejection is traversed.

With respect to claim 5, support for trying processing under first and second read optical conditions is found, by way of example, on pages 21-22 of the Specification (in particular, see lines 4-13 of page 22). By way of illustration, the second read optical condition may include “slightly changing read optical condition information sent to the camera illumination controller 10” (Specification, page 22, lines 6-8).

Claims 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, only because of their dependency from claim 5.

With respect to claim 12, support for referring to a wafer ID including a first ID comprised of code and a second ID comprised of alphanumeric characters is found, by way of example, on page 15 referring to the illustration on Fig. 5 and 6. By way of illustration, see, lines 11-12 of page 15).

Therefore, the rejection of claims 5-8 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, should now be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Ono Satoru, JP 10-227184. This rejection is traversed.

Independent claim 1, requires, *inter alia*, reading at least one identification information character string (ID) marked on a semiconductor wafer.

Ono Satoru involves character-by-character recognition, which Ono Satoru paragraph 10 states is characterized by “providing a means to choose an optimum value individually to each character of an identification indicator, a number, a notation, etc.” Ono Satoru indicates that the recognition of a character string proceeds character-by-character, the lighting for each character being individually re-adjusted until the character is readable; identified characters are then stored as the identification process moves on to the next character.

Ono Satoru does not disclose or suggest an evaluation score obtained for the character string as a whole rather than for the individual characters, as *inter alia*, required by independent claim 1.

Hunter does not remedy the deficiencies of Ono Satoru as they relate to Applicant's claimed invention. Hunter relates to a scanning apparatus that is assumed to have the ability of reading without fail at one try each time. The specific method of reading is not described or suggested by Hunter. In particular, processing when reading cannot be performed is not described by Hunter. Therefore, Ono Satoru and Hunter, even taken together in combination as a whole, do not disclose or suggest the features of independent claim 1.

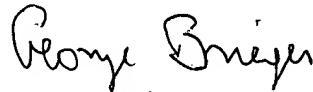
Claims 2-12 depend from independent claim 1, and thus incorporate novel and nonobvious features thereof. Accordingly, claims 2-12 are patentably distinguishable over the prior art for at least the reasons that independent claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

In addition, Ono Satoru does not disclose or suggest that the recognition processing is performed by collating the result of a plurality of IDs recorded on the semiconductor wafer, as *inter alia*, required by claim 2.

Further, with respect to claim 3, the Examiner comments (Office Action, paragraph 4) that claim 3 is obvious by putting the warning message which is obvious from Hunter together with Ono Satoru. However, as the Examiner has also accepted the warning apparatus is not described by Hunter, and it is respectfully submitted that a recognition that repeats the obviousness indication is groundless.

For at least the reasons set forth in the foregoing discussion, Applicant believes that the Application is now allowable and respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the rejections and allow the Application. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this amendment or regarding the Application generally, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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